

4  
NEW PUBLICATIONS.

## BAYARD TAYLOR'S NOVEL.

HANNAH THURSTON: A STORY OF AMERICAN LIFE. By BAYARD TAYLOR. 12mo, pp. 360. G. P. Putnam.

The habit of acute observation which has so largely contributed to the eminence of Bayard Taylor as a writer of travel, and the insight into the workings of human passion which forms an essential feature of his poetry, are to a very considerable extent reproduced in the composition of this novel. It is in the main a story of actual experience, founded on a familiar acquaintance with certain peculiar aspects of American society, not aiming at intense sensational effect, and eliciting the sympathy of the reader not so much by a stormy appeal to the imagination, as by quiet fidelity to nature. The scenes are laid in the interior of the country, and the characters taken from the common every-day intercourse of rural life. No intelligent observer can have failed to come in contact with the originals of the like scenes in his own experience, if he has chanced to intimate with the village population in almost any of the Northern States, although no tokens are given which might enable a curious or mischievous reader to establish a case of personal identity. Several of the leading characters are prominent in the ranks of social reform and benevolent enterprise, which furnish both occupation and amusement to a large number of the rural worthies of our land; their peculiarities are hit off in a vein of lively, but not exaggerated caricature; and the eccentric and ludicrous traits which furnish tempting materials to the writer's talent for satire, are attached to the individuals, and not to the interests which they represent.

The attraction of the story depends less on its excitement of the plot, which is simple in its construction and natural in its details, than on its fine developments of character, and the vigor and beauty of its descriptions. In the experience of the heroine, Hannah Thurston, the power of a deep and genuine affection to temper an excessive love of theory is admirably depicted; the progress of her mind constantly wins upon the interest of the reader; and he at length shares the common joy, when she escapes from the perils of too great love of speculation, and attains the heights of a serene and noble womanhood.

A beautiful piece of still-life is presented in the picture of Hannah Thurston's mother, trustfully watching the indications of the inner light, in an abode which can scarcely be met with except among the spiritual descendants of the man "who made himself a complete suit of leather," the prophetical George Fox:

The plot of ground in front of the cottage already wore its winter livery. The flower-beds were covered, and only the clumps of arbor-vitae and the larch balsam-fir were allowed to dip their heads into the green. Miss Dilworth passed around the house, for she knew the fondness of the inmates for warmth and comfort, and the sitting-room, which they had only occupied looked southward, over the vegetable garden, to the meadows of the eastern valley. Everything was scrupulously neat and ordered. The tops of vegetables left for seed and the dead stalks of summer flowers had been carefully removed from the garden. The walks had been swept by a broom, and the wood shed elsewhere more or less chaotic in its appearance, was here visited by the same hand. Its scattered chips seemed to have arranged themselves into harmonies formed like the atoms of sand under the influence of time.

In the kitchen a girl of thirteen—the only servant the house afforded—was scuttling the kettles and pots on the cooking-stove. This operation might be seen in the parlor just as well as little appearance was there of the usual "slope" and litter of a kitchen. This was Friend Thurston's specially as a housekeeper—her maxim was, that there was no part of a house where it could not be received.

Her neighbor, the wife of her kitchen, an elderly widow, wherein there was a slight mixture of despair.

The sitting room, beyond, was made cheerful by windows opening to the south and east; but more so by the homely simplicity and comfort of its arrangement. Every object spoke of limited means, but nothing of pinched or stinted. The motley-colored rug was clean, clean, and warm; the old-fashioned rocking-chair, which was creaked, and its cushion, were smoothed and combed; a few boards were whitewashed and white wash in the grate. A stiff wind from the southern window held some of the rain in pots, magnetized heliotrope, and somber verbenas. There were but three pictures—a head of Milton, and old wood-engraving of the cottage where George Fox was born, and a tolerable copy of the Madonna della Segnac. On a stand in the corner were the favorite volumes of the old lady, very thin now, but still in full force, a treatise on Scott's Works, Waddington's Journal, and William Penn's "No Cross, No Crown."

A swinging book-shelf suspended on the wall contained a different collection, which evidently belonged to the daughter. Several volumes of Carlyle, Margaret Fuller, Shirley, Pettine von Arndt, De Staels' "Corinne," the "Record of a Woman," Milton, George Sand's "Ondine," Mrs. Chidiock's Letters from New-York, Hugo Miller, and bound numbers of the "Literary Herald" among them. Had a certain dress been sent, it would have been for "The Slave," or "Avalanche," Mrs. Stirling's "Curious Pictures," the weekly edition of "The New-York Tribune." A rude vase of "brickbank," on a bracket, was filled with a mass of flowering grass, exquisitely arranged with regard to their forms and colors, from pale green and golden gray to the liveliest browns and purples. This object was a work of art in its way, and shed a gleam of beauty over the plainness of the apartment.

Friend Gilliland Thurston, leaning back in the rock-ing-chair, had drawn her hands, with the knitting they had, across her lap, and looked out upon the hazy valley. Her thin hair was in the close Quaker cap, which barely allowed her gray hair to appear at the temples, was a sweet, placid expression through the sunken eyes and set lips of physical suffering. The spotless head seemed benumbed; many folded, covered her neck and breast, and a wretched arm was tied over her shrivelled, rather from habit than from age, shrivelled hand. Her fingers once more clasped, though they expressed patience and trust. These were the prominent qualities of her nature, the secret of her cheerfulness and the source of her courage.

The following skilfully tinted sketch gives us a deeper perception of the character of both mother and daughter, and prepares us for the revelations that are to come in the history of Hannah Thurston:

There was no Quaker Meeting nearer than Thurston, and hence it had been the widow's custom, on "First Days," to read, or hear her daughter read, from the classics of the sect. To Hannah, also, in spite of her partial emancipation, there was a great pull—it was the sweet simplicity and sincerity of the early Friends, and she read the "Writings of Fox, Barclay, Ellwood, and William Penn," with a sense of awe and reverence. She had added some color words of a purer character, while the more cultivated Quakers had adorned as before inspired by the true spirit—Thomas a Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, Madame Guyon, and Pascal. She now took the oft-referred "No Cross, No Crown," of William Penn, the tone of which was always consoling her; but this time its sweet, serious utterances seemed to have lost their effect. She gave the words in her pure, distinct voice, and drove to make them into her own language, and she did this with such ardor, and impressed herself between her and the familiar manuscript, and made the task mechanical. The widow felt it a sympathetic presentiment rather than from any external evidence which she could detect, that her daughter's mind was in some way disturbed; yet that respectful reserve which was habitual in this, as in most Quaker families, prevented her from prying into the nature of the trouble. If it was a serious concern, she thought to herself, I must speak to her.

"Friend Gilliland, I am sorry to say, that your daughter has been ill for some time, and I wish you would let me know what is the matter with her. I have written to her, but she does not answer me. I have not even a mother, and I am afraid she will be in danger."

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